Peace Organisation

Reg. No. B 3092

HARIJAN

Editor: MAHADEV DESAI

VOL. IX, NO. 1] AHMEDABAD — SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 1942 [FIVE PICE

THE MONTH IN BARDOLI

I

Sardar's Garden-Home

When Gandhiji consented to spend a month in Bardoli in accordance with his promise to spend a month there every year, he did not know what an atmosphere the Sardar had kept ready there to receive him. He was ready, he said, to accommodate the members of the Working Committee in the Ashram, he was ready to make all arrangements for a session of the A. I. C. C., if it was decided to hold it there, and he was ready to accommodate all the workers in the various constructive departments that came for talks and consultations with Gandhiji. The month was, therefore, full to overflowing with activity, and on an average about two hundred people a day received comfortable board and lodging. Elaborate arrangements had to be made for all this, but thanks to the Sardar's hold on Gujarat, everyone in Gujarat, rich and poor, co-operated with him in making Gandhiji's stay as full of repose as it was bound to be full of work.

And in giving him the needed repose and a constant sense of well-being not a small part was played be the Sardar's garden-farm. Close to the lovely little flower-garden was a beautiful banana garden in place of the grass-land that it was three years ago when we went there. To say that it was a banana-garden is to say the least about it. For into the making of it had gone the Sardar's exquisite skill as an economic and expert agriculturist and his devoted care about every little detail. "I knew the Sardar's power of organisation," said Gandhiji on his return to Sevagram, "but I discovered for the first time that the Sardar was a skilled agriculturist. Every inch of space in the banana-garden and every drop of water that was being given to it had been made careful use of. The banana yielded a yearly crop, but in between the plants at convenient distances were fruit trees like the mango and the *lichi* and the *chiku* and grape fruit, and on the ridges were various vegetables. Surrounding the garden had been planted permanent trees, and inside the garden were walks making it easy for the field-worker to take care of the trees and also providing enough space with velvety earth for those who desired to have their morning and evening constitutional. All this was enough to rest and please the eyes and the mind. The Sardar's labour had yielded the Ashram several thousand rupees and set an example to others. As a result dozens of people had taken to banana-growing."

The Working Committee's Decision

The Working Committee of the Congress met for days — unconscionably long as the carping critics said, but not too long for those who wanted to put themselves right with one another and with the world. From that point of view not a day was wasted, and Gandhiji had enough time to commune with himself and with his colleagues. I shall say nothing about the deliberations in the Working Committee — I have in fact neither the competence nor the right to do so. But I shall make an attempt to indicate broadly a few things that emerged from the discussions inside as well as outside and the talks that followed the decision of the Working Committee. Though the actual decision came to be made on the basis of the interpretation of the Bombay Resolution, what was of vital importance was the actual feeling in the minds of men. No matter how the Bombay Resolution was interpreted, were we clear about certain fundamentals? Were we clear that the policy of non-violence that we had followed, to the best of our ability, for twenty years was no religious creed or for no religious purpose, but a wholly political method for the achievement of the political independence of India? Gandhiji had no doubt on the question. The next question was — could we at this critical hour in our nation's history give up that policy even for the sake of proffered freedom? "So far as I am concerned," says Gandhiji, "even if I was given the utmost power conceivable, even if I was made the Viceroy of India today, would I ask the people of India to take up the sword to keep the Empire alive? I for one should feel that I was committing moral suicide in that I would be abandoning the faith of a lifetime, the faith which I had persuaded the Congress to accept for twenty years as a policy. The steady unflinching pursuit of that policy has brought us quite close to the achievement of the objective. Am I to abandon the very boat which has brought me quite close to the shore? Yudhishthira would not forsake his faithful dog and enter the gates of Heaven without him. For he knew that the Kingdom of Heaven would be as naught to him without the dog, i.e. his faith. Would the Arab (i.e. the Congress) give up towards the end of the journey the faithful steed (i.e. non-violence) that had made it possible for it to make that journey? It would be an act of betrayal or faithlessness on my part."

There is another question also. In his open letter to every Briton Gandhiji had advised him not to fight the enemy with the weapons of the enemy but to set an example to the world by abandoning violence and adopting intensive non-cooperation. He had advised the same course to the Abyssinians and the Czechs and the Poles. "Could I, when the war is at my door and when I am in the same predicament as they, forget the sovereign remedy I suggested to them and

clutch at the method I have denounced and discarded? No matter what the country would say, what should be the attitude of individual Congressmen who had sworn by the method of non-violence?"

He was clear that, if it was felt that we had committed a mistake, that it was worth while bargaining a principle for what seemed to be a richer gain, they should declare their conviction, and if and when the objective was gained, they should convert the whole of India into a recruiting ground, ask every man and woman to contribute his or her share in the war effort, and even extinguish themselves in so doing. What was needed was downright honesty. He at any rate had never conceived this possibility. If he knew that some day India would have to engage in a violent war in order to win Independence, he would long ago have addressed every youth to go in for military discipline, and he would not have placed tireless emphasis, day in and day out, on the various items of the constructive programme.

An Eye-opener

The Sardar had called a meeting of the Provincial Congress Committee. Gandhiji was invited to address it. He first asked everyone if he had understood all the implications of the Bardoli Resolution. Several people did not raise their hands. "Then," he said, "let me put it to you in a nutshell. The resolution means that, if the Government gave a guarantee that full freedom would be given after the war, the Congress would help in keeping this Empire alive. It was not that the bargain had been actually made, but the terms had been agreed upon, whereas, if I did not want to enter into any bargain at all, I should plainly say so. If you feel that on your agreeing to offer full co-operation in the war effort, India will have complete independence after the war, that the British will thereafter remain in India at your mercy and sufferance, that even during the war you will run your own affairs provided of course that your Defence Minister will carry on the war to victory, you must confirm the Bardoli Resolution. The temptation is very great indeed. If for that sake you are ready to reverse the Congress policy and purchase Swaraj and pay as price thereof Ahimsa, you must confirm the resolution. Remember that the very greatest of our leaders are party to the resolution and they have not chosen to do so lightly. As against this there are those who think that Ahimsa is a pearl of great price and that it cannot be given up, that it can never be the price of Swaraj, then their position is different. But if you are in doubt, if you feel that in sticking to Ahimsa you lose both Ahimsa — because you are incapable of it — and Swaraj, that Gandhi is a good man but it would be prudent not to go the whole length with him, then you must accept the resolution. Only those will express their disapproval of it who are sure in their heart of hearts that prudence, political insight, policy, every consideration, demands that Ahimsa may not be sacrificed for Swaraj. Now let those who will vote for the Bardoli Resolution raise their hands." 36 raised their hands. "Good," said he. "Now let the *acharyas* (masters) of Ahimsa raise their hands." It was a perplexing challenge, but 27 plumped for Ahimsa. There were about ten neutrals who wanted to put questions, but Gandhiji said as the vote was quite informal the neutrals need not trouble themselves.

I am tempted to comment on the whole proceedings, but I must resist the temptation. Events that followed will be better understood in the light of them.

Khadi Vidyalaya

There were various other meetings. On the eve of our departure the A. I. S. A. opened the Gujarat Branch of the Khadi Vidyalaya — the opening ceremony being performed by Gandhiji. It is a small beginning, with only 15 students, but with willing work and faith it may grow into a big tree. Gandhiji in declaring it open said:

"Needless to say that it gives me pleasure to declare this Khadi Vidyalaya open. There should be many such Vidyalayas in Gujarat. As a matter of fact Khadi Vidyalaya may be said to have been opened when in 1921 we decided to prepare for launching Satyagraha. I had not then discovered the word 'Vidyalaya' and had at any rate not associated it with khadi, though I knew that khadi was a Vidya (Science), and a most important of sciences. But I had then not the courage to say it. But the beginning was made here, anything that was invented in the line took the name of Bardoli — as for instance, the 'Bardoli *Pinjan*' (Carding Bow). Then we had a big depot here for the manufacture of all our implements. Whilst, therefore, it is a pleasure to me to open the Vidyalaya, it is a matter of sorrow that we should be opening it at this late day.

"It needs no argument today to prove that the charkha is bound up with Ahimsa and therefore with Swaraj. What is going to be the part that crores of our people will play during the deadly carnage that is going on? We know the part that Government are playing, we know the part that some of us are playing at their behest, and to satisfy the pangs of hunger and starvation. They are rushing headlong to take part in the work of destruction. Millions are being collected from the rich and the poor, and yet the Government coffers are ever empty. But barring those that are thus directly and indirectly helping in the work of destruction, what are the rest going to do, what *can* they do? How are they to carry on? There is starvation and poverty everywhere. There is scarcity of water, and unlike in South Africa where there is every provision against droughts, there is none here, and we and our cattle die like flies for want of water. Those that go to war do so in the hope of returning alive after killing others, some may not return at all. But we? Shall we be content to die like flies? We have sworn by Ahimsa and pledged ourselves to win Swaraj by Ahimsa. What then is the thing that can enable us to work for Swaraj, and to stand erect and strong in face of this conflagration? It is the charkha and all it means. Land we have, but the land system, uneconomic holdings and methods have reduced us to the level of beasts of burden, it does not yield us enough to eat all the year round, and we are workless for almost half the year. We have, therefore, to be up and doing and fill our time with productive work. That work is the production of khadi, etc.

"I do not want to repeat the argument or go into the implications of the science of khadi. Let this Vidyalaya generate a force that may universalise the charkha in Gujarat. There are, I am told, seventy thousand Congress members in Ahmedabad. If all these were regular spinners, and if they gave their quota of yarn to the Congress? Congress soldiers should not forget that their arms are the charkhas and spinning regularly is their 'military' discipline. The military weapons and munitions today have proved futile. They have failed to keep Czechoslovakia, Poland and France free or alive, though they boasted of renowned soldiers. President Roosevelt says he and the Allied Powers are fighting the Axis Powers to make the nations of the world free, and that the Axis Powers are figthing to enslave the world. But to me both the parties seem to be tarred with the same brush.

"What shall we do in the midst of this mutual destruction which spells freedom for none? The charkha and all it means is the only thing that can enable us to live and to make us stand in honour and self-respect. This we can do if we can combine faith with understanding, for un-understanding faith will not carry us far.

"Don't think that you have come here just to learn the art of khadi. You have come here to bear the burden of the work for Swaraj. It is a tremendous burden to bear, and the very first lesson you have to learn is to know the qualifications of the soldiers of Swaraj. The very first is Restraint and Patient Labour. That is what the charkha will teach you. The renowned cities of the world are crumbling unto dust. London is changed out of recognition, the edifices which the builders thought would stand the ravages of time are no more, and our cities like Rangoon will share the same fate. The age of cities is thus coming to an end. The slogan of 'Back to the villages' was never so true as today. The mills will not be of any avail. They are producing cloth for the belligerents and may ere long cease even to do that work, and may have solely to engage in producing munition. We have therefore to produce all our cloth and to make our villages self-sufficient in all respects. That you cannot do without a life of Restraint and Patient Toil. The course you have to prepare for is not simple. It will require all your energies and your faculties, for it is an all-comprehensive one. Every one of us, men and women, have to lend their hands and their minds and their hearts to the work of building our nation and Swaraj."

M. D.

(To be continued)

Just Published

ECONOMICS OF KHADI

By Gandhiji

An up-to-date collection of all important writings on the economics of khadi and the charkha. Pages 628. Price Rs. 4. Postage etc. As. 10. Can be had at Harijan office — Ahmedabad, and at 130 Princess St., Bombay.

CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

By Gandhiji. Price As. 4. Postage 1 Anna extra.

THE NEXT PHASE

Gandhiji issued the following statement from Bardoli on the 7th inst. :

My being relieved of the direction of Congress Civil Disobedience does not reduce my responsibility but increases it manifold. For one thing, my official disconnection with the Congress itself increases my detachment; but since detachment never means indifference, my attachment to every Congressman increases and I must speak to him more than before. The voice of silence was enough to direct the campaign of Civil Disobedience, but it is not enough to explain and interpret in terms of non-violence the day-to-day puzzles that arise in the minds of Congressmen and others by reason of the overwhelming events happening near us.

Rangoon was naturally and culturally part of us before Burma years ago became part of British India and, therefore, it remains part of us though now sundered. What has happened there, has had its repercussions all over India.

So far as I can see, Civil Disobedience in the sense in which it was launched is not likely to be revived on behalf of the Congress till the war has ended. In a purely symbolic manner it may have to be kept up not in the name of the Congress but on behalf of resisters of all war on the pure ground of non-violence, no matter how few they are. It will be kept up for the sake of asserting the right of resisters to carry on propaganda against all war. They dare not keep still in the midst of the unhuman slaughter that is going on. They must not only speak and write against it, they must, if need be, sacrifice themselves in the attempt to stop the torrent of blood. Whether they are a few or many they have to live their mission.

Before taking any step in the direction of Civil Disobedience I propose to restart the three weeklies and understand the reaction of Government to the new orientation. I hope that they will have no objection to propaganda, naturally non-violent, against all war. It would be non-embarrassing in the sense that there cannot be, as there never was, any idea of surrounding or picketing munition factories or recruiting offices.

If the right is not conceded, there must be token Civil Disobedience by the fewest possible, even one or two known believers in resistance to all war. I must not select many, because every worker is wanted to educate the people in the art of non-violent behaviour in the face of impending danger.

Strange as it may appear, I suggest that ceaseless occupation in constructive programme is the best preparation to face danger. For it means concentration in villages of the city people and their being occupied and occupying the villagers in productive and educative work.

This removes unemployment and with it fear. Such movement on a large scale at once inaugurates a new social order. It will constitute the greatest contribution to internal peace, and should render nugatory formidable panicky ordinances just issued.

HARIJAN

Jan. 18 **1942**

PEACE ORGANISATION

(By M. K. Gandhi)

If the Congress were an organisation with a military bias, there is no doubt that today it would be a full-fledged military unit, every member becoming trained to be an efficient soldier. Fortunately for India and humanity, the Congress is not such an organisation. No other purely national organisation is or can be in the India of today. Fortunately again for India and humanity, the Congress has pledged itself since 1920 to win India's freedom through non-violent means. But up to now it has been largely a debating society, offering Civil Disobedience at intervals and all the time only playing with its vital programme of construction. At one time every Congressman was expected to create something for the nation. He or she was to spin for the nation. Congressmen would not respond, and the clause about spinning was dropped. There were other items too which every Congressman was to work. But he has not done so to the extent expected. The moment has now come for him to make a definite choice. The only programme before him is to become a servant or soldier of peace. A soldier of peace, unlike the one of the sword, has to give all his spare time to the promotion of peace alike in war time as in peace time. His work in peace time is both a measure of prevention of, as also that of preparation for, war time.

If then I was a Congressman with a vote, I would vote, as an emergency measure, for requiring every Congressman now on the Congress register or to come hereafter to possess the minimum qualifications for working the constructive programme. It would be wrong to remind me that the Congress should retain its democratic character. It will not lose it because, of its own motion, it becomes an efficient working body which anybody undertaking to obey its discipline and conditions of membership may join. The Congress will cease to be popular, if it cannot deserve popularity in times of stress. If it cannot provide work for the workless and hungry, if it cannot protect the people from depredations or teach them how to face them, if it cannot help them in the face of danger, it will lose its prestige and popularity. No person or corporation can live long on his or its capital. The latter has to circulate and multiply itself.

The Congress has become popular because it has been foremost in fighting imperialism. Today the old way is of no avail. Nobody thinks of mass revolt at the present moment. The best, quickest, and most efficient way is to build up from the bottom. The psychological moment has come. "Back to the villages!" has become a necessity from every point of view. Now is the time to decentralise production and distribution. Every village has to become a self-sufficient republic. This does not require brave resolutions. It requires brave, corporate, intelligent work. As far as I know at the present moment this is common ground between the rulers and the people.

Let every Congressman answer for himself whether he will be a soldier or servant of peace or whether he will become a nonentity unwilling to take his place in building up Swaraj.

On train Bardoli-Wardha, 9-1-42

WHY ?

(By M. K. Gandhi)

While I was engaged in organising and conducting the Civil Disobedience movement on behalf of the Congress I could not issue the three weeklies without noticing the doings of civil resisters and the general progress of the movement. That would have been to turn the weeklies into Civil Disobedience organs and to challenge the Government to suppress them. The Government in their turn could not but have accepted the challenge and suppressed the papers and even prosecuted me. Whilst I must always be ready to welcome imprisonment, I was not then ready to court it. Nor was it my plan to invite suppression when my avowed object was to organise strictly and only individual Civil Disobedience. Therefore, even at the price of sacrificing the pleasure of serving the people in various ways through the weeklies, duty demanded their stoppage. I feel that the step taken was correct in every way.

The reason for suspension now no longer exists. On the contrary I should fail in my duty, if I did not resume publication. As I have repeatedly said I am no enemy of Britain. I have many dear and personal friends among Britishers. I cannot wish ill to Britain. My resistance to war does not carry me to the point of thwarting those who wish to take part in it. I reason with them. I put before them the better way and leave them to make the choice.

But we have arrived at a stage where it is no longer merely a question of resisting war effort. There are questions which confront war-resisters as much as they confront war-mongers. And they can be decided only one way by both, though the approach must vary. Such are questions of dealing with scarcity of food and clothing, looting, and bread riots, etc. I have views on all these and like questions. Resumption of the weeklies is needed for the dissemination of my views on these and like matters. In the ability of the people to deal with them without fuss and even without Government effort lies the way to Swaraj whose basis is non-violence. Mere Government effort cannot deal with crises affecting millions of people unless there is voluntary response from them.

If we wish to achieve Swaraj through truth and non-violence, gradual but steady building up from the bottom upwards by constructive effort is the only way. This rules out the deliberate creation of an anarchical state for the overthrow of the established order in the hope of throwing up from within a dictator who would rule with a rod of iron and produce order out of disorder.

These columns will then deal with the day-to-day problems that face the people.

On train Bardoli-Wardha, 9-1-42

Notes

Sir Akbar Hydari

The late Sir Akbar Hydari was a rare combination. He was a great scholar, philosopher and reformer. He was a devout Muslim, but he saw nothing antagonistic to Islam in Hinduism. He was a student of various religions. He was catholic in the choice of his friends. On the return voyage from the second Round Table Conference we found ourselves in the same boat. He was a regular attendant at the evening prayers I used to have on board. He was so interested in the Gita verses and the bhajans we sang that he had got them all translated for him by Mahadev Desai. He had made me promise that we should tour together in India in the interest of communal unity. But God had willed otherwise. The late Lord Willingdon had a different programme for me. I was plunged into the Civil Disobedience fight. Sir Akbar and I could never carry out the programme. He had come under the influence of Shri Aurobindo Ghose. He was almost invariably in Pondicherry during the days when the sage of Pondicherry gave the quarterly darshan to his devotees. Sir Akbar's death is a great loss to the country. My respectful condolences to the deceased's family.

Sevagram, 14-1-42

To the Subscribers

The Manager tells me that the subscribers of *Harijan* have appreciated the unavoidable suspension and exercised extraordinary patience. With a few understandable exceptions they have not recalled the balance of the unused subscription due to them. I am glad to be able now to say that they will have their copy again regularly. It will not be possible to retain the old rate for reasons they know. The subscriptions left over will be credited to the subscribers who will be notified when they are to be exhausted. I hope that the three editions will retain their old popularity. I expect even a visible increase, for I believe in the intrinsic value of the menu that will be served to the reader from week to week. The three weeklies are purely and simply media of service. Never have they been a business enterprise.

"Violence Is Disastrous"

Shri S. V. Thakar, the quiet but efficient worker in the Harijan and other causes, sends me a note drawing attention to a violent feud between two parties of Bhils which his intervention with Government assistance has just prevented. The late Gula Maharaj, himself a Bhil reformer, had by his earnestness and simplicity appealed to the Bhil imagination, and thousands of them inspired by him had abandoned drink and other evil habits. He died a year ago leaving a successor. There was a social boycott proclaimed by the reform party against those who would not give up bad habits. This bred bad blood. Violence seemed imminent. Shri Thakar's timely intervention referred to above stopped bloodshed. But the reform has suffered a set-back. The party of opposition is in the ascendant, and unless the pure ethical spirit again pervades the movement, it may collapse. Shri Thakar rightly wishes to draw the moral that violence even in a good cause will not answer, and that every reform must be broadbased on the willing and enlightened association of the people concerned. They cannot be coerced into good habits.

Adibasi

Thakkar Bapa complains that, whilst he likes the pamphlet dealing with the constructive programme, he misses in it mention of Adibasis or the so-called aboriginals, such as Sonthals, Bhils, etc. The complaint is just. Many other causes are included in the constructive programme by implication. But that cannot and should not satisfy such a humanitarian as Thakkar Bapa. The Adibasis are the original inhabitants whose material position is perhaps no better than that of Harijans and who have long been victims of neglect on the part of the so-called high classes. The Adibasis should have found a special place in the constructive programme. Non-mention was an oversight. They provide a vast field of service for Congressmen. The Christian missionary has been more or less in sole occupation of the field. Great as his labour has been, it has not prospered as it might have, because of his ultimate aim being the Adibasis' conversion to his fold and their becoming de-Indianised. Anyway no one who hopes to construct Swaraj on the foundation of non-violence can afford to neglect even the least of India's sons. Adibasis are too numerous to be counted among the least.

On the train Bardoli-Wardha, 9-1-42

Hand-spun as Measure of Value

In my part of India shells and seedless dried almonds were used as coins accepted by the people and the State treasury. They had no intrinsic value. They were a measure of people's deep poverty. They could not afford the lowest metal coin. Five shells would buy them a little vegetable or a needle. I have suggested a measure which will not be a mere token but which will have always an intrinsic value which will also be its market value. In that sense it will be an ideal measure. For the present and by way of experiment I have suggested a warp length of a single thread of yarn as the lowest measure and to be used in dealings principally with the spinners and generally with khadi lovers. The spinners can have all their daily wants supplied as against fixed quantity of yarn. Stores will need to be maintained by the A. I. S. A. in combination with the A. I. V. I. A. and ultimately with those who will give their co-operation. As I conceive it the system can be worked only if it is decentralised. This is not its demerit but merit. The end to be sought is human happiness combined with full mental and moral development. I use the adjective moral as synonymous with spiritual. This end can be achieved under decentralisation. Centralisation as a system is inconsistent with non-violent structure of society. I have presented to khadi workers and those who are interested in the solution of the problem of India's poverty, the idea of a measure of value in its barest outline. Let them work it out and find for themselves flaws, if any, in the conception, and if they do not, let them enforce it where they can.

Sevagram, 13-1-42 **M. K. G.**

ON THE PATH OF AHIMSA

Physical Training and Ahimsa

About the time the *Harijan* had to cease, Gandhiji wrote a long article discussing the relation between physical training and Ahimsa. If that exhaustive article needed any elucidation, it is to be had from the lives of those who suffered and even laid down their life for a cherished mission. I was reading the other day the life of Dr. Pennel, the surgeon who worked among the frontier tribes for several years. Dr. Pennel's work, in my opinion, was weakened (to use a very mild word) by his proselytising zeal. He regarded medical missions as "the language of the church militant", and believed that part of the treatment of his patients consisted in preaching to them the gospel. Wherever he went he went with "an Afghan convert", and used all kinds of occasions (e. g. a horse-fair) for preaching the gospel, "undeterred by the hail-storm of stones and clods of earth which greeted him and his assistants." "At Hawed," says his biographer, "they at first encountered some opposition, for the people utterly refused all intercourse or medicine if there was also to be preaching. However, by dint of firmness and persuasion, they were induced to listen to a short non-controversial address and, afterwards later in the day, Dr. Pennel was able to preach three times without let or hindrance." On occasions one wonders which to admire more — Dr. Pennel's pathetic zeal in pouring his preaching down his patients' throats along with his medicines, or his patients who, in spite of terrible suffering, "refused to listen to a word more of our wicked religion and left us"; which to admire more — the surgeon who preached the gospel to unwilling patients, or the patients who "heard the gospel time after time but remained untouched, saying, as, alas, so many do, 'your medicine is very good, but your religion is very wicked.'"

But that is about the way the missionary spoils his good work. These prefatory remarks were necessary before I proceeded to describe the fearlessness of Dr. Pennel — the fearlessness which no physical training in the use of the sword or firearms gave him, but which came from his passion for his work. Indeed a reading of the various ways in which Gandhiji says a Satyagrahi should physically fit himself put me forcibly in mind of Dr. Pennel. He had certainly built up his body in his youth by gymnastic exercises, swimming, taking long treks, and so on, but never by sword-play or rifle-practice. But see what a wonderful example he has left for all Satyagrahis :

> "After a treacherous attack on a British force by the Waziris, the officer in command of the troops at Bannu wished the Mission to have a guard of soldiers, a precaution of which Dr. Pennel distinctly disapproved as he maintained that the surest way of calling forth the kindliness and protection of the tribes, was by showing them that he did not rely upon material arms for his defence. For this reason he never carried arms of any description himself, and on more than one occasion it was this fact which saved him from assassins who deemed it cowardly to attack an unarmed man."

He had trained himself by hard discipline. Starvation, he thought, was part of the daily lot of a missionary, and he used to collect crusts of bread till they were dry enough to satisfy his Spartan taste. He gave up most of the comforts that one may lawfully enjoy; he had none of the "petty vices"; never smoked; walked miles on end without tiring; travelled all night in tongas, ekkas, and on horseback; "in a tonga he generally slept sitting upright, with his long legs curled over the luggage; in a tum-tum he found it less risky to sleep in the net under the seats, his head at the driver's feet and his feet sticking out over the footboard at the back; and as the driver generally kept the horses' grass in this net, he found it a very comfortable bed ! An ekka did not afford such good sleeping accommodation, so he would unwind his turban, and plaiting it about the poles of the awning would draw his knees up to his chin, and thus leaning against the back-rest made by his puggri or turban would sleep peacefully until his journey's end." Once while paying a visit to Esa Khel District, he found the river Kurram very much swollen, "so, dismounting from his riding camel he swam across and got some men to go back for the beast. On reaching mid-stream the animal lost its footing and turned over and over in the river. With great difficulty they got the saddle off, and with the help of some more men pulled it to the land half-drowned." Again, while on his pilgrimage as a *sadhu* on a cycle, "we had to ford the river several times. We lost ourselves in a jungle of tamarisk bushes. These grew denser and denser till we had to lift our machines at arm's length and over our heads and struggle through, while our lower garments got torn to shreds and our legs badly scratched."

He had thus learnt to accustom himself to physical endurance, but what made him an utter stranger to fear was his passion for his mission.

> "When he heard that a certain Mullah had preached of his murder as a sure road to Paradise for the Ghazi who accomplished it, he forthwith set out unarmed and unescorted to visit the house of his adversary. If a road were known to be beset by raiders, his intrepid spirit would find exhilaration in traversing just that way. It was this spirit of fearlessness that not only won him friends among the manly Pathans but more than once was the means of saving his life."

As I write this I am reminded of Shri Ravishanker Vyas, the life and soul of the reform movement among the 'criminal tribes' of the Kheda district. No physical drill or sword-play has given him the remarkable capacity for physical endurance and fearlessness that he has. He can walk miles on end, dare death and devilry, and when in jail he used to grind 45 seers of *ata* (the maximum hard task) in less than the time ordinary criminals used to take over it.

The Minimum Test

And as for the concrete test of belief in Ahimsa I am reminded of a conversation between Gandhiji and a would-be Satyagrahi in an Indian State. It indicated that Gandhiji expected a much higher standard of qualification from the would-be Satyagrahis in Indian States than from those in British India; but it also indicates the minimum test of belief in the

charkha as the pivot of constructive work. The would-be Satyagrahi said he was a believer in Ahimsa.

"How much do you spin — 5 yards or 50 yards?" Gandhiji asked him.

"Never more than 50, and sometimes even less than 5," was the answer.

"Do you spin every day, or once every week, or every month?"

"I don't spin more than 50 or 100 yards in a month."

"Do you make your own slivers?"

This last question was hardly justified after the answers the previous questions had elicited, but Gandhiji went on in an almost ruthless way.

"No, Mahatmaji," was the reply.

"Then where do you get them from? Get them by post?"

"No, I get from the khadi bhandar, and when I do not get them there, I get them through friends coming from places where slivers can be had." I have a suspicion that the reply was prompted by the question which indicated a rebuke if the slivers were got by post. Poor man! He might have said: "I spin so precious little that I have my year's supply at a time from the bhandar."

"Do you make your *mal* (string) yourself or do you purchase a reel from the market?"

It was no use pursuing this inquiry, and more questions would have landed him into more scrapes. His friend, therefore, intervened and said: "Mahatmaji, he is a believer in Ahimsa, and that, I thought, was the essential qualification. According to the test you now apply we are all likely to fail."

"Well then," said Gandhiji rather sternly, "it is better that none of you takes part in Satyagraha than that you should go without being properly qualified. My standard is inexorable. I want you to spin not only regularly but intelligently. I want you to know how to test your yarn, how to draw fine yarn and coarse yarn, to know the economics of khadi and so on. And when you will say to me, 'I know all these things,' I will ask you: 'What about your life?' Do you observe non-violence in your relations with the members of your family and in your daily affairs? Where is the good of your saying you accept non-violence in theory? Supposing you said you accepted the theory of khadi, but purchased and used foreign cloth, how would your acceptance of the theory help me? And please understand that, while in British India I am prepared to reconcile myself to belief in Ahimsa as a policy, I want you in the States to believe in it as a creed. Violence in many Indian States is greater than in British India, and we want the supreme purity and sacrifice of a Prahlad to meet the violence there. Give me a Prahlad, and I shall give him my blessings."

Begin at Home

In this connection let me reproduce here a part of a letter addressed by Gandhiji to Khan Saheb Abdul Ghaffar Khan. It will be remembered that the Khan Saheb believes in Ahimsa as a creed as he has uneqivocally stated once again in his recent statement on the Bardoli decision, and he desires to train those who will follow him also as cent per cent non-violent Satyagrahis. It is necessary to know this in order to understand the letter:

"I hope that all the conversation we had in Bombay has soaked into you. If it has, every problem could be solved by reference to those fundamentals which I tried to put before you. Our non-violence has to begin at home with our children, elders, neighbours and friends. We have to overlook the so-called blemishes of our friends and neighbours and never forgive our own. Then only shall we be able to right ourselves, and as we ascend higher, our non-violence has to be practised among our political associates. We have to see and approach the viewpoints of those who differ from us. We have to be patient with them and convince them of their errors and be convinced of our own. Then proceeding further we have to deal patiently and gently with political parties that have different policies and different principles. We have to look at their criticism from their own standpoint, always remembering that the greater the distance between ourselves and others, the greater the scope for the play of our non-violence; and it is only when we have passed our examination or test in these fields that we can deal with those against whom we are fighting and who have grievously wronged us.

This was one thing we talked about. The other thing I said was that a non-violent man has to keep himself engaged usefully during all waking hours, and therefore *constructive work is for him what arms are for the violent man.*"

This last sentence sums up in the vividest manner the essential difference between a believer in violence and non-violence.

M. D.

WAR AGAINST DESTRUCTION

In one of his speeches Shri Vinoba contrasted the obvious expressions of violence and non-violence. "Constructive work is the obvious expression of non-violence, destructive work that of violence. Violence expresses itself in bombing, destroying buildings, hospitals, churches, and innocent women and children. Non-violence creates where violence destroys; it creates the wherewithal to clothe the naked and feed the hungry. Violence expresses itself in incendiarism; non-violence extinguishes not only physical fires but the fires of hatred and vengeance." It is this conviction that made him throw himself heart and soul into the movement for the spread of education through crafts, and even in his statement before the court he mentioned it as a principal item of the constructive programme.

In the present turmoil when our intellects are clouded by ever-increasing war propaganda and our vision blurred by the smoke-screen of passion and hate, we may not see the part education through crafts has to play in the future. But wise people in all lands know what is in store for us if we do not stem the tide of destruction. In an editorial article of the Holidays Number of the American *School Arts* the editor deplores the prospect and emphasises the increasing need for craft-education. "The world is witnessing today the supposedly greatest nations in cultural development, bending all their

manhood and materials into building greater and better engines and transports for mass destruction of all that other men have built," says he, and adds: "Now as never before we should use all our energies towards creating more creative minds for building a new world for tomorrow's men, that they may have more creative minds and hands for creating the beautiful, rather than the destructive. This great art appreciation can only be established through actual doing, the actual handwork, rather than the mere book learning that has impeded for years our proper art growth." And this is how he inweighs against the wrong education with which we have clogged and corrupted the minds of our children: "For many years a false ideal has persisted that culture or genteelness consisted largely of not working with one's hands. Men with calloused hands were something uncouth, and the greatest desire of many a mother was to see her son capably placed in a 'white collar' job where he could accumulate wealth with a brain that would work only at a desk. This belief has brought its penalties upon each nation who made it an ideal, in lower standards of health, lesser art achievements, and social difficulties, and many leaders of our nation today are urging a greater return to the use of hands through many avenues of creative work. The seeming trend of the human minds, even evident in the mere child, is that of destroying or the breaking up of constructed objects. The tendency of destruction in the child mind will not grow as a trait in the adult, if he learns to use his hands in constructive art. He will too greatly respect all that goes into handicraft to ever approve the urge for destroying any part of the art crafts of his fellow men."

The editor also cites the statements of prominent American public men in support of "the learning which comes of doing things with the hands". William Knudsen, President of the General Motors Corporation, says:

> "In pioneer days when book learning was rare, the man who made his living sitting at a desk was envied. But the pioneer's legitimate aspiration for learning has decayed into a kind of snobbery which considers it more honorable to handle a telephone than a wrench, more socially desirable to dictate to a stenographer than to direct a crew of skilled mechanics. In the years from 14 to 20, when the creative urge ought to be developing and flowering, most of a youngster's energy is devoted to cramming theories out of books. The young man then finds himself all dressed up with theoretical knowledge and no place to go. Psychiatrists in recent years have been treating nervous breakdowns by occupational therapy. Possibly, if these people originally had a useful sideline involving manual skill, the breakdowns never would have occurred. And brain training is likewise an essential part of hand training. The best man is one who combines the learning of books with the learning which comes of doing things with the hands."

Boris Blai, Director of Fine Arts, Temple University, says:

> "During twelve years of teaching young people in arts, I have not found one student who did not possess a latent creative instinct that yearned for expression. I am convinced that every human being possesses a creative urge to make beautiful things, that this urge can be brought out and put to work with proper encouragement, and that suppression of it results in maladjustment of life. Furthermore, it is actually dangerous *not* to use your hands. Tests by neurologists at the Temple and other universities show that mental ability increases as the ability to use the hand increases. Manual work demands clear thinking, the working out of your own solutions to problems."

What can be a stronger argument than this last in support of our national plan of education through crafts? Against the training for the art of efficient destruction, the training which puts the musket on the shoulder of the child who has compulsorily to join the junior branch of the Hitler Jugend (youth) at the age of seven, there is the education which begins with a good grounding in creative work. Education through creative basic crafts can alone stem the tide of destruction that militarist education helps to swell every day.

Sevagram, 27-3-41 **M. D.**

TO SUBSCRIBERS AND AGENTS

Communications for the manager and money orders should be sent not to Sevagram or Poona but to the following address:

The Manager, HARIJAN, Ahmedabad

Cheques and postal orders should be drawn in favour of the Manager, *Harijan*, and not of any individual, and postal orders should be made payable at the Ahmedabad Post Office.

Correspondents will please note that the offices of the *Harijan* weeklies have been transferred from Poona to Ahmedabad, and communications or remittances sent to the former place will be delayed in reaching their proper destination. The subscriber number should be quoted in all communications.

A letter has been addressed to the agents stating the terms of agency, etc. Would-be agents will please communicate with the manager.

No individual or organisation or agent, except our own branch in Bombay (130 Princess Street), has been authorised to receive subscriptions on our behalf.

A specimen copy will be supplied on receipt of postal stamps worth one and half annas.

Manager

CONTENTS PAGE

THE MONTH IN BARDOLI — I ... M. D. 1
THE NEXT PHASE ... M. K. GANDHI 3
PEACE ORGANISATION ... M. K. GANDHI 4
WHY? ... M. K. GANDHI 4
ON THE PATH OF AHIMSA ... M. D. 6
WAR AGAINST DESTRUCTION ... M. D. 7
NOTES:
SIR AKBAR HYDARI ... M. K. G. 5
TO THE SUBSCRIBERS ... M. K. G. 5
"VIOLENCE IS DISASTROUS" ... M. K. G. 5
ADIBASI ... M. K. G. 5
HAND-SPUN AS MEASURE OF VALUE M. K. G. 5

Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Kalupur, Ahmedabad
Subscription Rates — INLAND; One year, Rs. 5; six months, Rs. 3. FOREIGN: One year, Rs. 7 or 12 sh. or $. 3